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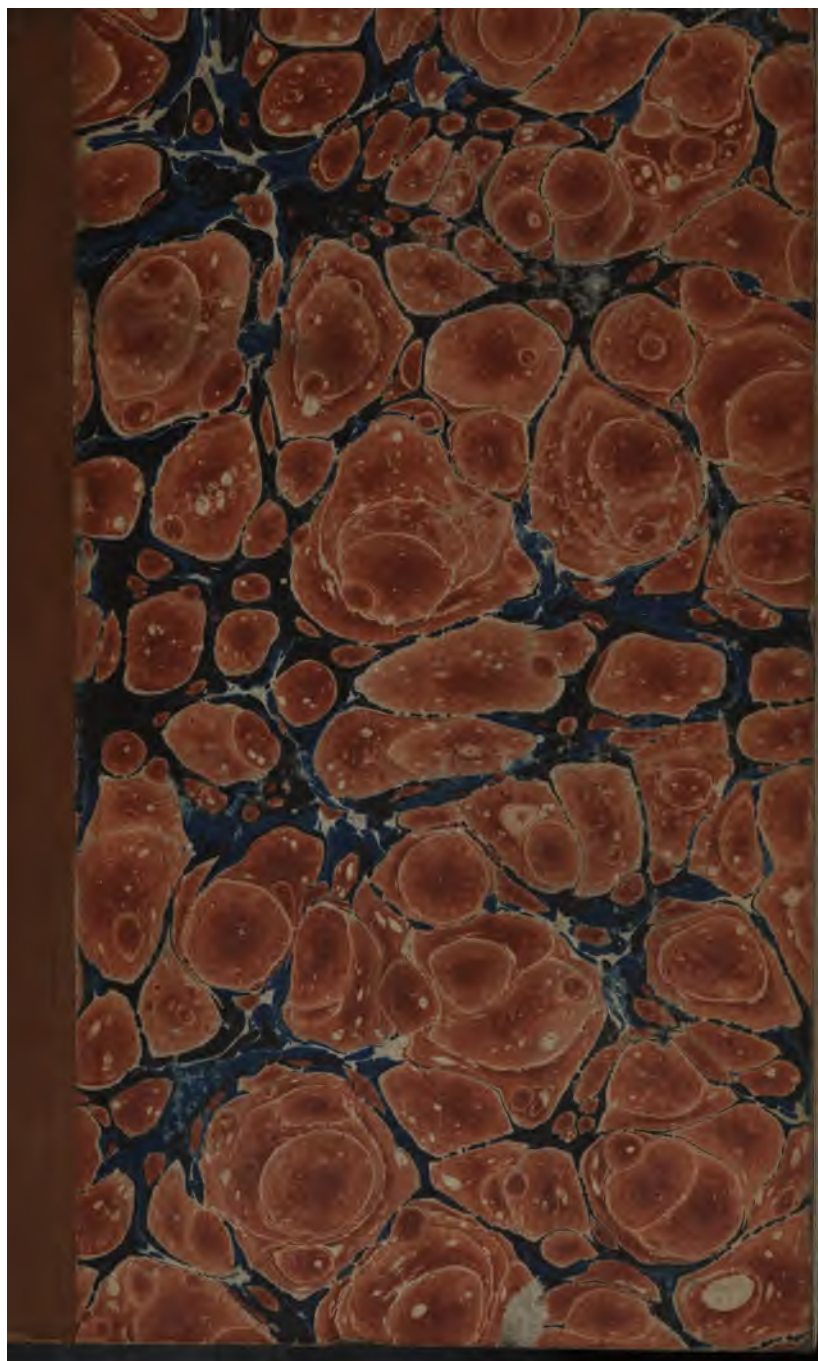
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BLAKE
ON
PHYSICAL DISABILITY,

ARISING FROM EITHER

Solitary Habits, Infection, or Impotence.

"KNOW THYSELF."

"Mens Sana in Corpore Sano."

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ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.



P R E F A C E.

THE authors of this treatise, in offering the result of their experience to the public, are actuated by the desire of conferring a benefit that will be best appreciated by the bashful, the timid, and that class of mankind which suffers itself to continue in a vicious course from false motives of delicacy and the shame of exposing their folly to another. Of all the evils which, unseen, prey on the very vitals of society, none is so destructive as Self-Pollution, a crime derogatory to manhood, opposed to the dictates of morality, a contradiction to Nature's laws, and heinous in the sight of God. Its victims are more numerous than those destroyed by war ; the solitary monster is never glutted, and his steps are none the less dreadful because they are not tracked in blood. Nature requires certain indulgences and God has mercifully provided them ; but, as in Creation nothing is forced or

strained, so in respect to the indulgences of passion, nothing should be carried beyond the bounds assigned by Nature. Reason tells, and experience confirms, the truth, that to live happily is to live well:—not as the gourmand who, addicted to the pleasures of the table, at length succumbs to apoplexy;—not as the drunkard, who falls gradually through the stages of life to end it as a raving madman or a moping idiot:—not as the confirmed voluptuary, who wastes his vital powers in the pursuit of a delusive shadow, (which, like the fabled Harpy, lures him but to destroy,) and terminates what might have been a useful and honourable career, in suicide or wasting decay;—but as the wiser he, who, in the words of the bard,—

“ Gives what is due to nature and to God
No dreaming Seer, no besotted Clod.
Religion, passion, reason, pleasure, claim;
Now this, now that, the passing hour’s aim;
None to excess, that none enjoyed may pall,
But each most loved because he shares in all.”

Marriage has been happily compared to Jacob’s ladder—its foot is on earth, but its head touches heaven;—and there can be no doubt that a well assorted union is productive of every blessing that this world can confer. Delicacy shrinks from penetrating the nuptial chamber,

but the sensible man knows that marriage means more than the union of congenial minds, and that as we should shrink from linking ourselves to an idiot or a maniac, so we should shun an alliance with one deformed in body—deficient of that which lends maturity all its charms, and the want of which blanches the snowy hair that freezes on the temples of age,—vigour. Read this treatise, therefore, Ye Children of the Lonely Sin, ye who have wasted the sap of life in solitary excess, who have undermined your health in secret till your attenuated form tells too plainly that nature has nothing left to destroy; Read, while yet reason is not shaken from her throne, for assuredly the garden of your mind shall become a dreary waste if ye pause not and learn. And you, ye “Children of Night,” whom solitude initiated and multitude perfected—Read ye also, for the taint of the one sin is in you, and nothing but confidence can save you from destruction.

Seek at once the Skilful Practitioner; unfold the real causes of your malady without reserve or concealment, and what raises the blush may perhaps be the means of rescuing you from death. How often has delicacy prevented the seeking of assistance till the application has been too late. How often, even when recourse is had

to medicine, has the patient not flown to some cruelly unkind friend who has foolishly prescribed a supposed specific, to the certain danger of the taker. Avoid these evils at once ; seek the Regular Practitioner, one who has devoted time and study to acquire a proper knowledge of the various functional and organic diseases, and whose experience, accumulated by thousands of cases, renders his aid valuable and the patient's cure certain.

ON PHYSICAL DISABILITY.

MAN exists in a threefold state; he is the representative of the past and its connecting link with the future; he is a member of society, and is bound to afford his share towards its support; he is the head of a family, to which he owes the exertion of those energies with which nature has gifted him. But the satisfactory discharge of the triple duties thus imposed, depends most materially on the state of the individual, physical and mental; for how can man worthily represent the mighty past before the mysterious future, except his mind is prepared to appreciate all that antiquity offers to experience, that this may in turn garner up in store houses for hereafter? How can a member of society support what protects him, except his mind and body be endowed with the vigour that ensures endurance, the power that resists opposition, and the integrity which commands success? How can the head of a family hope to secure

the affection and respect of those around him, except by the exercise of philanthropy and love, and by the display of that corporeal excellence which attracts the eye before other qualities reach the heart? Mind and body act sympathetically one on the other, and the connexion between them is so close that every emotion of the former has a corresponding sensation in the latter. Man, although endowed with mind to rule the body, is nevertheless a slave to his physical condition,—the frailty which proves him mortal; a state of bodily infirmity always produces a disorganization of the mental powers, and it therefore becomes in the highest degree important, that every effort should be made to preserve health. Experience has proved but too fatally that consumption is the bane which destroys a large portion of the inhabitants of this country, the worm that feeds upon the finest fruit, the blight that destroys the most brilliant flowers. In some families this disease is hereditary, and the father has but too frequently the harrowing consciousness that he himself is both the creator and the slayer of his own offspring; he begets them, but the germs of death are sown with the seeds of life. Pulmonary consumption, the phase which the scourge of England generally assumes, proves but too incontestibly

how universal the decay must be that could so rapidly sap what is otherwise the strongest portion of the frame. Medical experience has shown that one of the principal causes, if indeed it be not the only one, of consumption, is the insidious, attractive, and fatal habit of Self-Pollution—which attracts, as the serpent is said to fascinate its victim, only to destroy. There can be little doubt that, were it possible to arrive at proofs of the existence of this propensity, it would at the same time be irrefragably evidenced that it has always produced not only consumption in the principal, but the germs of it in his offspring. Let the benevolent minded look around at the casual passengers through any great thoroughfare : how many will not afford some signs of premature decay—the flushed cheek, the hollow eye, the haggard brow, the wasting frame, meet the gaze, and stand as witnesses of the damning deed ! Let the philanthropist mix in society ; how many will he find ill without any recognised disease, with minds unsettled, spirits depressed, memory failing and intellect warped ! These are the victims of the practice of Self-Pollution, which undermines the health, destroys the strength, impairs the mental faculties, and leads to loathsome madness, moping idiotcy and death.

It is a too common error for the mature to forget the follies of youth; gratified themselves either in marriage or concubinage, they do not remember how they provided for the wants of desire when opportunity and other means were wanted. They fail to recollect, even if they have never practised Self-Pollution themselves, that the vice but too frequently obtains a command over inexperienced youth and leads to evils that can never be remedied. Or if they are not blind to this fact, nay, if they wink at it, under the impression that at least it saves their children from impure contact and that thus Venereal Diseases are prevented, they are fearfully deceived, and are laying up more serious consequences than they can possibly dream of. There is a vast difference between the sexual act, as between male and female connected, and the lonely enjoyment. In the former, the very contact with the denuded body, nay, the play of the imagination as to the charms to be unveiled,—the well turned ankle, the snowy bosom, the rounded limbs—all operate powerfully in the production of the natural and necessary excitement: and during the act, the voluptuous heavings, the enraptured contortions, the lascivious embrace, contribute still further to second the imagination; thus the parties mutually influencing each

other, bring about the required crisis in a way least injurious, because most natural, least weakening, because in accordance with the instinct implanted by Providence. In the solitary act the case is widely different; there, imagination must do all, and must itself supply the visionary images of its fancied beauties; there the body has to operate on itself; nature receives no aid from nature; passion is not heightened by passion; the heavings of the one are not answered by the contortions of the other, and the drain on mind and matter is great in proportion as each is strained from its legitimate function. The proof of this may be found in the fact, that while Onanists, when they first practice their disgusting habit, effect their purpose with difficulty because of the opposition of nature; they ultimately produce such an enervation of body, and so morbid a state of mind, that emission takes place on the slightest friction, nay, even at the sight of a beautiful face or fine figure. The case of the youth who, suffering from a pulmonary disease, suddenly died in his bed while apparently listening to a female relative reading to him, is too well authenticated to require comment. His disordered imagination suggested to him his depraved practice, and nature, unable to bear the shock, gave way. When the covering was removed

from the corpse, the position of the hand afforded too damning a proof of his criminality to leave room for charity to suggest a doubt.

The Boarding School, the vessel at sea, and the lonely workshop, are the prolific sources that produce the horrible solitary habit, which grows with the growth, and strengthens as the vital strength diminishes. And how do the victims torture their ingenuity to find an excuse for that which degrades them even in their own sight,—the fearful secret that, locked up in the innermost recesses of their privacy, still speaks through the “still small voice” of conscience, and makes them shudder at their own turpitude. But all is vain; they may deceive the inexperienced, they may even cheat themselves into the belief that the consequences of their deed, nocturnal emissions, are involuntary on their part, and that their active agency having ceased, the nightly fruits of it are not of their producing. But the eye of experience sees at once their malady and its causes; the knowledge of the medical man leads him directly to the root of the evil, and he knows but too well the delusion which has deceived even those who raised it. The Medical Man, therefore, is the only true friend to those who either do indulge in solitary habits, or have done so, and reap the

fruits of their frailty. "Conscience makes cowards of us all;" but that is real bravery which would betray its own weakness; the greatest effort of moral courage is the acknowledgment of error: let then the unthinking, the voluptuary, and the guilty—all of whom commit the same excess although under different influences—reflect for one moment on the enormity of their sinful secret as an act; on its demoralising tendency as a practice; and on its ultimate consequences—Consumption, Madness, Suicide, and Death.

As has been before observed, the Boarding School is one of the sources whence the habit of Self-Pollution springs; nor is this at all surprising. Youths of 14 and 15 years of age, associated together at all times, comparing their mutual experience and the observations gleaned from servants and others, feel strong excitement, and seek to gratify it. Nature, or some already initiated friend supplies the information, and the pernicious habit is practised till the neophyte, intoxicated with his guilty pleasures, becomes a devotee. But it is fair to imagine that this baneful practice would cease, when maturer years, the command of money, and the facility of obtaining "some willing Phillis," shew more legitimate means for the gratification of desire. Such,

however, is very far from being the case : many persons continue to be Onanists as long as nature permits them to draw on her resources ; like the Eastern Opium Eaters, they live on the vice that is killing them, and become inebriated only to brace the nerves for greater excesses ; even as the hard drinker gets at first tipsy on a glass, and ends in being a "three bottle man."

Were it possible to depict the various effects of the Secret Sin on the human frame, their horrible colours would terrify many from the practice ; but to enumerate them only would be to jot down "all the ills that flesh is heir to." This needs not excite surprise or awake incredulity. Every man has a peculiar conformation, and on every one, therefore, the destructive habit has its peculiar results ; and that the denounced practice is destructive may be understood by the most inexperienced. What would become of a man who daily loses half a pound of blood ? the simplest reply is, he would die. What, then, can be expected of the individual, male or female, who is perpetually draining the constitution of its subtlest essence, who constantly excites the sensibility to the highest possible degree, convulses the whole frame, and throws the mind into a temporary delirium. Can this, is it supposed, be done with impunity ? Can the

generative fluid be extracted without diminishing the store whence it is derived? Is the fountain exhaustless? Can it not be dried up? Can the nervous system be perpetually raised to the highest pitch of excitement without damaging its delicate texture? Can the mind be at all times thrown into a state of extatic delirium without acquiring more than its ordinary tone, and thus, by over exertion, impairing itself. The overdriven horse dies under his efforts to achieve a final leap: the overburdened man ruptures himself: is the spiritual mind able to bear more than man or horse? Alas! no: the act multiplies itself in every way, and, not least perniciously, in what are termed involuntary nocturnal emissions—those acts of mental Self-Pollution which prove incontestibly how powerfully the mind must be affected by the practice when even in sleep—the death of life—it ceases not to operate, but hurries on to the gratification of passion; hence the waking deed is reiterated in the guilty dream, and the draught on the constitution, great already, becomes doubly dangerous, because, while in Self-Pollution, at least friction is used to produce the necessary excitement, and body works with mind, the nocturnal emission is a pure effort of the mind, and hence gives a shock which but too soon shews its effects—in

the arresting of the expansiveness of the system—in the paralysis of different functions of the body—in palpitation of the heart—in rushing of blood to the head—in the derangement of the whole nervous system, and hence in difficulty of seeing, amaurosis, ophthalmia, and blindness—in hardness of hearing, ringing or buzzing in the cavities of the ears—in loss of appetite occasioned by the nauseous taste constantly rising in the throat—in the gradual shrivelling of the whole body, and the utter prostration of the mental powers. It becomes impossible to fix the attention on any definite object ; fits of abstraction ensue, and then arise despondency and dislike, because unfitness, for the pleasures of society. Pimples and blotches appear on the face and body, the hands and feet are constantly cold and clammy : difficulty of breathing is experienced on the least exertion, such as walking fast, running up a hill or up stairs ; the stomach is disordered, and longs for pungent or acid condiments to pamper the appetite,—flatulence, indigestion, heartburn and spasms ensue as a necessary consequence ; the eyes feel heavy, and a species of torpidity induces sleep, but not rest, for it is disturbed by frightful dreams and agitated tossings ; the teeth acquire an acrid taste about them, and then rot, and the shoulders begin

to grow round from the weakened state of the spine, which is continually attacked by shivering sensations. The generative organs participate in the general decay; the prostrate gland refuses to answer to the influencing power of the mind, loses its power of erection, and gradually becomes shrivelled and flaccid; the seminal glands decrease in size and hardness, and sometimes even give way, as it were, and fall into veinous shreds or strings. Constant emission is superadded, without, however, pleasure or excitement, and the victim at length falls into a state of atrophy which speedily terminates in death. The disorganization of the mental faculties, meanwhile, keeps pace with the decay of the body; the sense of right and wrong becomes less discriminating, and hence the moral powers are undermined; then follows either blasphemy or religious fanaticism and monomania; hypocrisy in one thing induces deceit in many, and the mind, worn out by constant drags on its powers, at last becomes either altogether torpid, or is raised to a state of such excitement that it cannot recover its balance, and madness ensues.

This is no overdrawn picture: experience has too often witnessed the painful consequences here delineated; and although, and naturally so, the subject is always

treated with the greatest delicacy, and is carefully screened from the public eye, it has, nevertheless engrossed the attention of some of the most eminent medical authorities at home and abroad.

Dr. LAWRENCE, an acute observer of nature, said, in one of his lectures,—“ I have often had occasion to observe that medical skill has failed in what were represented and appeared to be cases of the disease commonly called decline, simply because one remarkable feature of the case had been concealed from the physician, and because he had failed to enquire as to its existence : I mean the decay of those portions and functions of the human frame which delicacy veils most scrupulously from the public eye, and affections of which seem by some great mistake to have been placed without the pale to which ordinary practice confines itself.”

Another eminent authority, GRASSIN, many years president of the French Academy, in a series of lectures on the generative functions, thus expresses himself :—“ It is not difficult to account for the consequences arising from the habit of Self-Pollution, but these sometimes present themselves under forms so complicated and horrid, that it would almost appear as though the prostrate gland were the seat of all the vital functions.

I have known instances of gonorrhoea, and even symptomatic syphilis, ensue from excess of this practice; blindness, though an uncommon is not an impossible result; paralysis, epilepsy, and consumption, are the invariable effects, after a gradual progress through the various stages of weakness of intellect, torture of conscience, decay of the bodily energies, racking physical pain, external eruptions, and lastly, internal disorganization. Nor is this all; so close is the connexion between the animal and the spiritual essences, that I have known many instances of madness produced solely by this habit, which has first destroyed the nervous system and then attacked its seat, the brain."

A case occurred not long since at Guy's Hospital, of a young man who had become an idiot from the effects of Self-Pollution: his mind constantly harping on the one subject became first morbid and torpid, and ultimately lost its hold on the frame, and was perfectly chaotic. He was subsequently so far cured as to be able to recognise individuals, but his intellectual faculties were entirely gone: reason had quite lost her power—he was reduced to the condition of the brute—one of feeling and animal instinct without anything to refine, to purify, and to humanise. Under these circumstances

it needs not excite surprise that suicide should be the end of many who have ruined themselves by Self-Pollution. Imagine a man newly married, who has for years indulged in this habit, holding to his heart his blushing bride, herself all passion and anxiety, from a knowledge that love has some mystery hitherto veiled from her, which marriage will develop. Imagine the extatic feelings of gratified possession which should agitate his bosom as he thus presses to his heart the object on whom all his desires have concentrated, and then picture the revulsion which will drive the coward blood back to its deepest channels, when the harrowing truth bursts on his knowledge—he is impotent—the solitary voluptuary is unable to make his bride a wife, and her virgin sighs pierce his heart like poisonous arrows. Nature refuses to perform her functions, and the victim to lonely indulgence, unable to bear the silent reproach of her whom his impotence so deeply insults, and the rankling consciousness of his fearful guilt, flies to suicide as the end of his tortures.

The husband, whose energies have not been utterly exhausted, finds his desire for children ungratified; he dares not accuse his wife, for he knows with what ardour she embraced the new-found expression for love which

marriage gave, he knows that she had not dried up the fountain of nature's treasures. He feels himself the culpable cause, and, unable to bear the torturing reflection, he ends his career by suicide. And thus it always is with animal excesses: he who gives way to anger is fortunate if he becomes not a murderer; gluttony leads to apoplexy, intoxication to dropsy or paralysis, and the drunkenness of animal gratification to impotence. Hence it not unfrequently happens that young married people, plunging too greedily into lascivious delights, draining at once the stream which was designed to conduct them through life, lose their natural power, and become victims to another form of sensual indulgence.

There are some, especially of the male sex, who decline to marry, alleging as a reason, either the fear of poverty, the want of adequate means, or the absence of a suitable companion; but these excuses from discharging one of the most important duties to society, prove utter selfishness or undeveloped turpitude, and arise either from a base love for money, which absorbs all other feelings, or from a consciousness of some secret disability which incapacitates for the marital function. The longing after sexual intercourse is an integral part of our nature, and it may be safely inferred that he who

pretends to eschew it by legitimate means is a hypocrite, gratifying his passions, at the expense perhaps of his health and strength, by Onanism or Self-Pollution, or running right into the opposite extreme of unbridled licentiousness.

It is not very uncommon to see women, who, being married, are supposed to have the means of indulging in all that nature demands or voluptuousness requires, stray from the path of rectitude, and commit the heinous sin of adultery. It is not intended here to attempt any palliation of such conduct, for the great principles of virtue, religion and morality are inalienable, but it is at least fair to inquire what causes have induced or deluded the erring woman into a career which must terminate, setting aside all other considerations, fatally to her reputation, her position, her self-respect. Could it be immoderate lust only that could tempt her to forget God, her husband, and her honour? Was the tongue of her paramour so all powerful that it stilled the voice of reason, religion, and conscience? Was it mere wantonness that lured her to a share in a crime of which all the horrors, all the penalties, and all the disgrace fall on her alone? Common honesty compels the acknowledgment that, though such reasons may have prevailed

in some, nay, in many cases; in many, also, the original sin lies at the door of the "Injured Husband" (as the world terms him) whose impotence or incapability does nothing but excite the desires already implanted by nature; who provokes feelings which he cannot gratify, incites passions that he cannot indulge, and thus plunges the victim of his cruelty into an abyss to extricate herself from which she sins so fearfully. Whence arises this concatenation of circumstances but in the youthful indiscretion, continued through adolescence and puberty to manhood, and thus undermining the vigour which might have gratified the wife's desires; for it is romantic and hyper-moral to talk of woman's modesty and *retenu*: nature is nature; the purest minded girl might, and doubtless does, confess to her own heart that she expected something, she knew not what, in marriage. Love, the master passion, awakens desire, and it were as easy to bid the brain not think, the tongue not move, as to attempt to deprive the organs on which desire acts of their uncontrollable sensations. Cruel, barbarous, then, is the wretch who takes to his arms the girl that loves him, because to her, at least, he seems perfection; and who does not, because he cannot, give her what she has the right to demand. He it is who first breaks the

tacit contract which marriage implies ; he it is who inflicts a refinement of torture most sensitive to a sensitive mind ; he it is whose Self-Pollution has been the first adultery, when it led him to yield to a shadow what nature intended for a substance. But the world does not see all this ; the woman's crime is alone apparent ; she, guilty thing, suffers all the indignity, bears all the reproach ; she, perhaps, more sinned against than sinning, becomes the victim in both senses of the word, and is the sacrifice laid by the world on the altar of the culpable husband's outraged affection. Reflect on this, Ye Solitaries, when, in the silent hours of night, ye are draining nature of her riches, and exhausting a mine which, properly husbanded, would yield you its treasures through life : reflect on this result of your sin—the shunned adulteress—the outcast bastard—these are some of the fruits of your labours.

Let, therefore, the unwise, the weak minded, and the voluptuous at once put an end to a state of things which promises such fearful results ; let them take a firm resolution to betray themselves, and let them at once seek the aid of the Medical Man—he is their only friend ; the very fact of their having made him their confidant, will have a beneficial tendency, for conscience will tell them.

that though absent his eye is on them, and this will strengthen the resolution that he strives to implant, and co-operate with the treatment which his skill suggests for their restoration to health, and the duties of society. All consists in confidence, which is a fragile breath with the worldly, but an iron bond with the Medical Man ; with him, as with the Catholic Priest, the secret of the confessional is inviolable and inviolate ; and as it is better for the sinner to unbosom himself, to submit to one short humiliation, than to proceed unrepenting in a long career of crime, so is it advisable that the victims to the solitary habit should, of their own accord, burst the fetters which bind them, and so free mind, body, and soul from pollution and certain destruction.

Enough has been said in the preceding pages to point out the evils arising from the habit of Self-Pollution ; to continue would be only to repeat what we have ourselves written, or to reiterate the sentiments and arguments of others. It may, however, still be necessary to direct attention to one important subject which has been incidentally alluded to elsewhere—the subject of Nocturnal Emission during sleep. We deem this recurrence the more essential, because there are many into whose hands these pages will come, who, having for some time prac-

tised the solitary habit with impunity, that is, without feeling any of the symptoms previously dwelt on, will naturally be inclined to entertain some misgivings as to the truth of our statements. These Onanists, perceiving perhaps no effect of their crime but the Emission in Sleep, will fancy themselves secure from destruction, and will continue in their career till warning comes too late, and the skill of the Medical Man would in vain essay to save them. Of all the enervating results of Self-Pollution, none announce more certainly the breaking up of the constitution, and the prostration of the vital functions, than continued Nocturnal Emissions; for, in the first place, the loss of so much of the most essential fluid in the system; the conversion of juices by glandular secretion into semen, instead of their absorbence by the lacteals into blood; this alone, this perverting of the ordinary vital support, is enough to show that the physical construction must suffer, even as the body would die of inanition from the want of nourishment. It is evident that nature is sustained by the operations of eating and drinking: take away these, starvation and death follow; use them sparingly, emaciation and decay ensue. Take food, but convert its nutritious particles into semen instead of blood, and the

effect must be the same as though the food had not been taken. The process is this : food passes through the oesophagus into the stomach, where it is acted on by the gastric juice, and converted into a white pulpy substance called chyme ; hence it passes into the first part of the bowels, which, from its assisting the process of digestion, is denominated the second stomach. Here it receives the bile, which by a process that might, chemically speaking, be termed precipitation, separates the useless from the nutritious portions ; these latter, called chyle, pass through the intestines, and are there absorbed by the lacteals for conveyance into the venous system to form blood. Thus the body is maintained. Now, it is evident that the fluid which is employed in the procreation of our species must be an integral portion of our system, and that an improper use or lavish abuse of it, must affect the body proportionate to the vitality of the fluid wasted. Hence it is that the nocturnal emission is so baneful : in the first place, it shows a debilitated state of the nervous system, and proves that glandular secretion is going on more rapidly than nature intended : Secondly, it proves that the powers of the body are not under due control, but that, either too enfeebled or too irritated, they act independently of volition :

Thirdly, it proves that the influence of mind over matter is too great, and hence that, in a different way, the sufferer is what a maniac would be : Lastly, it exhibits the fallacy of the theory which maintains that the gratification of passion being necessary to human conformation, any means for its obtainment are legitimate. It does this by showing, that, whereas an ordinary or even a slightly strained indulgence in the pleasures of matrimony (or less hallowed but not more unbridled union) produces no bad effects, but on the contrary, *prevents Emissions at any but the proper time* ; the practice of Self-Pollution, though resorted to less frequently than the natural enjoyment, not only does not allay the desire but stimulates it ; not only does not check, but causes the *greatest waste of the most essential juice in our nature*.

Pause, therefore, Ye Sensualists, and reflect on what has been here stated ; not for us but for you are these consequences of guilty indulgence pointed out ; not for us but for you is the fate which your deeds have brought about. Pause, therefore ; when you pause, reflect ; and having reflected, determine. The career of crime, like the mighty torrent, hurries impetuously on, whithersoever its force takes it, sweeping all before its waves, and often

conveying desolation to many a fertile plain and fair landscape : the path of virtue, like a ray of light, is direct and unbending ; but it illumines all it falls on, and reflects its brightness on others.

ON IMPOTENCE.

Impotence in man, or the inability to perform the virile functions, is the result of one of two causes—either of mental infirmity, or bodily weakness. When the disease (for such it may be considered) proceeds from the latter cause, it may fairly be inferred that the physical strength has been prostrated by excessive illness and exhaustion, or by some extraordinary draught on the resources of the constitution. It is, therefore, no uncommon occurrence to find Impotence the consequence of inordinate indulgence in Venereal pleasures, either natural or criminal, but especially the latter. We have already, however, treated somewhat largely on the results of Self-Pollution, and we shall therefore confine our observations on Impotence to cases arising from mental infirmity.

It is but too common an occurrence for the mind to effect what it most dreads : the man who fears danger,

will, very probably, be impelled by fear to do exactly what will lead into the very difficulty he would desire to avoid ; the man who fears he may become impotent is just in a position really to become so. The discharge of the virile functions is a mental as well as a physical act, and in a healthy state of nature, it cannot be accomplished without the union of mind with body ; hence if the mind be in anywise affected, the proper exercise of its duties is impeded, and the purpose is either ill effected or altogether prevented. But nothing so soon unnerves a man as the fear of ridicule or disgrace, and no personal disgrace or ridicule is considered equal to that arising from a state of unmanhood—if so expressive a term be allowed.

We talk of an eunuch with contempt, although he is the victim of despotism or cruelty ; we think of a man who has reduced himself to the level of an eunuch with scorn and abhorrence. It is therefore natural that every one should dread being placed in a position so to be judged, and this very dread, as before observed, tends to promote what it fears. In short there is a species of mono-mania on the subject, and the greatest difficulty is therefore to be encountered where no real disease exists, for we have to “minister to a mind diseased,” and its tone and temperament are to be ascertained before any

attempt can safely be made at eradicating the influences at work, or at exorcising the evil spirit that rules within.

Observations on this head might be indefinitely multiplied, but to little purpose, since it is as impossible to reason on a shadow as to define the precise form of a fantastic spectre of the brain; but where the mind is really affected, where, from grief, excitement, irritability, or other cause, the delicate structure of the nerves is deranged or the conceptions disturbed, there the case is widely different, and although the Medical Man is not more necessary than in the above named morbid state of feeling, he is more likely to find active employment, for the aid of medicine is more essential. But even here precise observations are impossible, for it is scarcely practicable to dilate, advantageously at least, on symptoms which vary with the variety of the human mind, and which present as many phases as the mind affords different constitutions. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with the simple allusions here made, merely adding two extracts from eminent medical authorities, bearing on the subjects treated, and confirmatory of what we have advanced.

The first is from a lecture by JAMES WILSON, F.R.S. He says:—"Before I conclude this sketch of the diseases

affecting the male urinary and genital organs, I beg leave to call the attention of my audience to a subject which is often productive of more real distress to the mind of the patient, than could be occasioned to the body by any active disease—I mean the supposition, that he is incapable of fulfilling the first great command, ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.’

“A person alarmed at the idea of impotency is most anxious to know if his suspicions are founded; but he dreads to enter on a proper enquiry, lest he should find them fully confirmed. He feels most reluctant to communicate such suspicions even to those medical friends, whose honour in all other things he would perfectly depend on, and whose professional talents he knew, and most highly estimated, from the fear that his loss of manhood would occur to their minds whenever he met them, or their presence would produce the recollection of it to his own. When such patients do apply to honourable medical practitioners, it should always be remembered by those to whom the application is made, that they have to minister to a mind diseased; the complaints submitted to their consideration, however unfounded or light in reality, must not be heard with impatience or treated with levity. I have known the commission of suicide

the consequence of such injudicious treatment. It is the duty of a medical man to reason with a patient who will hear reason, and to demand confidence when the patient's mind is not open to conviction. Few people will be found so obstinate as not to listen at last, to what will relieve them from misery and despondency, although at first they would rather receive and believe.

“There are some real causes of impotence which arise from morbid action and alteration of structure, I have already mentioned instances of these ; but impotence often depends on the mind of the patient.”

The second extract we shall present is from a treatise by the celebrated JOHN GUY, Mem. Col. Surgeons. After some pertinent observations, he continues :—“This complaint deserves greater attention than is generally afforded to it by persons who write on these diseases ; for whether a local debility really exist, or it exists only in fancy, the effect is usually the same. The seminal vessels are fitted to perform certain functions with progressive regularity, which if undisturbed, they will continue to do through the whole course of a life. The mind of a man becomes severely afflicted under an impression of his inability to perform well the duties of his sex. Most men, at the occurrence of one failure of this

description, are quite ready to attribute their incapacity to an approaching loss of functional power, not reflecting upon the capriciousness of the human mind, or the slow progress of seminal secretion, which might enable them to perform the act at one time and not another, with one woman but not with another.

“In copulation, woman might be considered the passive object, and man the active, but he has not a plenary controul over this act. It is not, therefore, volition; for though in health the body might perform, the mind must be the spring of action, otherwise the cavernous parts of the penis will not be distended by blood, a disposition of the sexual economy, which is no more produceable at our command, than is the rush of blood to the cheeks, which causes blushing; or the gush of emotion from the eyes, called the shedding of tears. Probably the chief of the active principles of the human mind may in this common duty be called into requisition, for it is these that induce the inclination or motive to this action: among such principles especially, we may enumerate the desire of self-gratification, emulation, the love of displaying manly actions, personal regard, sympathy, &c.; but the will and faculty of reason are worse than useless in this performance; they are only employed

as far as adjustment goes, and if they then greatly interfere, it occasions a state of reflection which destroys that which is necessary for the accomplishment of the act.

“ Having said thus much upon ideal incapacity, I come to the more serious and deplorable part of my subject. Sexual ability in man is a compound power, requiring a perfect association between the testicles and penis; any functionary irregularity in their motions is more or less a state of disease; for since both are so intimately dependent on each other, the least want of exactness in their adaptation might be the cause of impotence.

“ For example, should there be an erection of the penis, without a corresponding influence of the mind, secretion does not accompany the erection, which, under such circumstances, is denominated a priapism. In the inflammatory stage of gonorrhœa, this symptom is frequently present, as chordee: it is induced also by intoxication, and is occasionally a diagnostic of the deplorable malady denominated satyriasis, or venereal madness.

“ But a far commoner derangement of these organs, and more strictly within that description of sexual weakness which we are now discussing, is where the testicles

and adjacent secretory organs perform their action with greater facility than the penis, which has not the corresponding erection. I have witnessed cases where the slightest allusion in fancy during a dream, has occasioned emission several times in a night, or even whilst walking or riding, if the glands were accidentally touched. A very general source of this distressing malady is the baneful habit of Self-Pollution, which has obtained the name of Onanism.

“Almost in every instance, where this destructive practice obtains an ascendancy, the party is conscience-stricken at his own violation of the divine ordinance, while at the same time he is laying the foundation of an impaired constitution in after life: yet he has not resolution to avoid the grievous sin. Perhaps the highest exaltation which man experiences, is his triumph over himself in the mastery of evil passions; but because he is usually alone on these guilty occasions, and that the evidence of triumph will be confined to himself—no looker on being at hand to question his prowess, he often yields himself unresistingly to the destructive indulgence of uniformly repented pleasure; conscious at the same time, of the many painful embarrassments which that indulgence engenders; and after each viola-

tion, resolving to abandon the unsatisfactory practice ; a state of atrophy too distressing to describe makes a terrible example of the offender.

“ Few constitutions are capable of bearing the loss of this essential fluid in excess, even in a natural manner, without the probability of inducing the same kind of debility ; but when recourse is had to such heinous and preternatural excitement—dismal must be the train of suffering which follows after. In the early stages of the complaint, different persons are variously affected ; some are incapable of procuring a discharge of semen into the uterus in the natural way, though they may effect an erection ; whilst others cannot perform the act of copulation, before emission takes place, without a perfect erection.

“ There is no doubt, but in some few instances, nocturnal discharges may be occasioned by irritability of the prostrate gland, or neck of the bladder, and by strictures of the urethra ; as in many cases by passing a bougie, the patient's cure has been effected ; but generally impotence, from want of power or confidence, is occasioned by self-abuse.

“ Great diversity of opinion has prevailed respecting the treatment of this malady, and some affirm that a

cure is not practicable ; and there may be good grounds for this assertion, when priapism becomes a disease in itself, and not a symptom of another. Many make themselves miserable by taking this observation in a general sense ; it may, therefore, be some consolation for them to know (the cause of the disease being known) that the cure may be effected ; as I could prove by a number of instances, if the necessity of secrecy did not stop my pen.

“ The diagnosis of this disease, is incompetency to perform sexual intercourse, and frequently a preference given to the unnatural propensity, though a natural desire might exist. The frightful consequences of these improper practices, it would be utterly impossible to enumerate ; but among them we find languor, lassitude, pains in the loins, with constipation of the bowels, pallid and cadaverous countenance, accompanied by flaccidity of muscular fibre, with coldness of extremities, violent head-aches, depraved sensorial functions, particularly of the eyes, trembling hands, disturbed sleep which does not recruit the strength for the next day's engagements ; and thence petulancy, discontent and quickness of alarm at trifles, palpitation of the heart, with a depressing pain and weight at the pit of the

stomach, which is frequently succeeded by imbecility and distraction of mind.

“ The usual practice has been to resort immediately to powerful tonics and active stimulants, without regard to the temperament or disposition of mind: these frequently produce excessive excitement, irritability and active inflammation. Others rely upon nutritious succulent food, cold bathing, and astringents; whilst some place their fullest confidence in sedatives. All of these may be useful in various modifications of the disease, but great attention should be paid to the idiosyncrasy of the patient, as tending to shew the extent of local derangement and diseased organic structure.”

“ANAPHRODISIA, OR IMPOTENCE.”

“ This deplorable visitation is the last crowning scourge of seminal imperfection, and may either originate in an impoverished and incompletely concocted secretion, through derangement of either of the secretory glands, or a deficiency of secretion in the glands from a general languor of the whole system. Thus the communication of disordered action, through indulgence in pernicious habits, is one of the main springs of deranged

structure, and produces excessive irritability of the bladder, spinal marrow, prostrate and urethra : after which follows an effeminate flaccidity of the penis, testicles and scrotum. Where impotence is consequent upon that baneful propensity, which cannot be sufficiently stigmatised, its extent of severity is greater than when produced by excessive sexual indulgence, because the vital fluid that could have improved the stamina of the system has been lost without satisfaction, consequently no gratification of the mind has been had in counterpoise to compensate, and in some sort repair the expenditure which has been going forward."

We shall conclude our observations on this head by adverting to one more feature in venereal affections, viz , Diabetes ; which is sometimes symptomatic or attendant on another disease, in which case it is not of a dangerous character ; and sometimes a primary affection, in which case it requires great skill in its treatment. Diabetes, as our readers are no doubt aware, means an immoderate flow of urine ; it may be occasioned by the use of strong diuretic medicines, frequently given in cases of gonorrhœa, and dropsy, by intemperance in living, or by hard drinking ; but it very frequently arises from an impoverished state of the blood, particularly as occasioned by decay

in the virile powers. An useful and valuable instrument has been invented for the purpose of testing the urine in cases of diabetes, &c., so as to enable the medical man to judge more accurately of the state of the disease. Attention is directed to this subject, because many have the disease without knowing it, and it becomes essential, therefore, to place our readers on their guard, lest through ignorance they suffer themselves to be weakened too much to be recruited by the aid of medicine.

DISEASES OF THE ORGANS OF GENERATION.

Having said thus much on the solitary indulgence, we deem it advisable to direct attention to the practice of indiscriminate sexual intercourse. The gratification of passion is a natural consequence of our physical conformation ; its use is beneficial, its abuse injurious ; for it is but too well known that from the unrestricted connexion of the sexes have arisen certain classes of diseases which more or less deeply affect the human frame.

How or when the Venereal Diseases were first introduced into Europe are questions that have been repeatedly asked but never satisfactorily solved. Some maintain that they came from the East ; others contend that they are inherent to humanity, and have always existed as the antithesis to the pleasures of sexual contact : just as apoplexy would result from over indulgence of the appetite, or as spontaneous combustion might arise from confirmed drunkenness. Certain it is however that these diseases, whatever their origin, do exist ; and

44 DISEASES OF THE ORGANS OF GENERATION.

that they are contagious though not epidemic. Hence while speculative schoolmen waste their time in investigating the problem of the why and when, the philanthropist and scientific labourer devotes his energies to the means for checking the ravages of the disease, no matter what its source. The superficial observer of human society can form no idea of the extent to which Venereal Diseases prevail, for, unlike other affections, these are studiously concealed ; the man, who, with a bilious head-ache or other slight ailment, would fly to the doctor, sometimes dies from having too long hidden a Venereal Disorder.

Numerous constitutions are utterly under-mined by neglected diseases of the class here adverted to, and that too before the sufferer is aware to what extent the danger has gone. Contagion is imbibed, the proper steps are not taken, and what might at first have been easily eradicated, becomes deep seated and difficult of removal. Nor are the effects confined to the first sufferer only ; the virtuous wife often becomes a victim to her husband's adulterous intercourse with abandoned women, and the unborn infant inherits, even in the womb, the baneful results of its father's depravity.

As the various organs and parts of the body have

their different functions, so it seems that some parts are more susceptible of particular diseases than others. Poisons permeate the body and inflame the stomach ; scorbutic eruptions have their locus in the skin ; hydrophobia attacks the throat. Scrofula is confined to the glands, while the skin, throat, and nose are more readily affected by Syphilis, or Lues Venerea. This latter disease arises from a poison, (designated by HUNTER as morbid) which produces contamination by contact, and is capable of being infinitely propagated. This is all that is known on the subject, for of the poison itself nothing certain has been ascertained ; its effects alone are visible. And even here great diversity occurs ; for, whereas by connexion with the same woman, many may become diseased ; in one we find violent gonorrhœa, or chancre, and in another slight gonorrhœa only. This arises, however, from the different constitutions or habits of the parties at the time of infection ; for it has even been known that one man will become diseased by communication with a woman, while another will not.

There are two great classes of diseases into which venereal affections are generally divided—Gonorrhœa, or Clap, a local or external disease ; and Syphilis, or Pox, with its concomitants, chancre, bubo, &c., a constitu-

tional and more malignant affection, dangerous in proportion as its virulence is nourished by the peculiar organization of the absorbents. Some contend that the poison by which these diseases are generated is identical; others maintain that their origin is in two distinct species of pus or venom. Certain it is, however, that the poison under consideration is always secreted by non-cuticular surfaces, and hence that not only the urethra, but the nose, eyes, throat, and ears are affected by it. Disputes have also arisen as to the lapse of time between contact and contamination—that is, between connexion with a diseased subject, and the appearance of the disease. In some cases the affections have been immediate, in others a long period has intervened. It is not our intention, however to enter into a disputation as to the premonitory symptoms or primary causes, we propose to deal here only with the various forms of the diseases under review, to detail their different effects and appearances, and thus to put the ignorant in possession of knowledge which will enable them to discern, with sufficient accuracy, the particular phase of their own complaint.

Gonorrhœa is common to both man and woman; in the former it generally attacks the urethra, in the latter the vagina, urethra, clitoris, and nymphæ, are all af-

fect. The first symptom is generally an itching of the urethra ; this is followed by incipient inflammation ; after which a discharge commences, the itching changes into pain, which becomes more violent when the urine is vacuated. The penis sometimes assumes a kind of semi-erect position or fullness ; the glands have a transparent appearance, owing to the overcharge of the reticular membrane with extravasated serum. There is sometimes excoriation at the entrance of the urethra, the canal of which becomes narrower, and, consequently, the stream of water discharged smaller. Discharges of blood sometimes supervene, especially when there is a tendency to chordee. A soreness is at times felt along the under side of the penis, and extends as far as the anus ; this soreness causes erection similar to that before described, but different from chordee, as the penis remains perfectly straight,

The discharge is at first a transparent, watery, and somewhat whitish fluid ; this sometimes changes to a yellow and sometimes to a greenish colour, depending on the strength of the inflammation. Should no other more violent symptom display itself, gleet and stricture very commonly ensue ; but we shall reserve our observations on these and shall proceed to notice the steps of a

being subject to a natural discharge, called *fluor albus*, which is not distinguishable from the discharge occasioned by the disease. Nor is pain, or at least in any extraordinary degree, a concomitant of the gonorrhœa in women, and it is therefore not to be looked for as a marked symptom. The appearance of the parts also is of little assistance, for they present little or no diversity, and there is little else to guide the medical man but the previous circumstances of the case. Of these the principal are, the having had connexion with men who might have been unhealthy, and the power of the woman's being able to communicate the disease to others.

The part principally affected is the vagina, and in this case the disease may be compared to a similar attack on the glans penis in men. In many cases, however, gonorrhœa extends to all the adjacent parts, and then considerable pain and soreness are experienced; these are accompanied by difficulty of walking, and other more unpleasant sensations. But there is one feature of the disease peculiar to women; the discharge sometimes runs from the vagina to the anus and occasions gonorrhœa there.

Gonorrhœa being a disease of a purely local character, its effects are for the most part not very prejudicial to

the constitution ; it sometimes happens, however, that the whole system becomes more or less affected by its virulence, and then contamination is much more likely to prove dangerous. Hence it is very manifest that the practice of treating lightly, or altogether neglecting to attend to, a case of gonorrhœa, is not only subjecting the person diseased to much protracted and unnecessary pain and inconvenience, but is also likely to be attended by consequences more or less fearful, according either to the particular state of the constitution at the period of infection, or to the power of propagation possessed by the individual. In both cases the aid of medicine is not only very essential, but it becomes of the highest importance when we reflect on the often fatal consequences of untimely neglect, and the dangerous results of unskilful or misapplied remedies. For it must not be imagined that every case of gonorrhœa is similar, and requires identity of treatment ; sometimes the inflammation is violent, occasionally mild ; it may be common or irritable, which latter phase may be attributable to the nature of the person diseased, and not to the disease itself ; sometimes, therefore, external applications alone will suffice to effect a perfect cure ; at others, internal specifics are no less imperiously demanded, and it often

requires the nicest discrimination and the most practised experience, to discover which is the particular remedy appropriate to the particular form of the disease subjected to treatment. For this reason it has been deemed advisable in this treatise, not to lay down any system of cure as efficacious in cases of gonorrhœa, for it might succeed in some and fail in as many. In every case, however, it may safely be asserted, that the use of mercury, so frequently resorted to, is certain to prove baneful, and that vegetable restoratives are alone calculated to remove the disease without damaging the constitution. Many thousands, who have been afflicted with venereal diseases, have lost their lives through the very means they have adopted (and successfully too, so far as the local affection is concerned) to remove gonorrhœa. The constitution, so to say, has been saturated with mercury, and the consequences, as before stated, have been fatal.

Perhaps, however, of all the concomitants or resultants of gonorrhœa, none are more permanently troublesome than stricture and the discharge known by the name of gleet. Long after the actual disease has disappeared, the gleet continues, and it sometimes even becomes intermittent—that is, it extends over a period of time, suddenly discontinues, and as suddenly comes on again. Some

authorities have been of opinion that gleet is of a scrofulous character—an opinion which is strengthened by the circumstance that cold sea water bathing has been found very beneficial as a remedy. Others have thought it to be the result of debility, but this idea, though it may occasionally be correct, is certainly as often wrong, for the treatment founded on this supposition has been found to operate injuriously. The discharge, in reality, appears not to have any specific quality, but to vary according to the constitution of the person diseased, or to the condition of the parts affected ; and, therefore, it is beyond the bounds of possibility to lay down any universal method of cure, for as in cases of gonorrhœa what to one may prove serviceable, will be noxious to another. Rest, however, is always indispensable, for exercise is frequently a cause of the continuance of the disease ; and regularity of living, with abstinence from all stimulants or exciting beverages, is no less essential. Connexion with the other sex should also be avoided, as the discharge sometimes returns immediately after the performance of the sexual act ; and this is all that can be said, with any degree of definiteness, on the subject of gonorrhœa and its attendant affections.

It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to make any very lengthened observations on the nature of stricture, for its disagreeable effects are but too well known, and the treatment necessary for its removal is so purely surgical, that no remarks, not strictly professional and technical, can be successfully advanced. It is a disease of all others of this class, perhaps, most painful, and sometimes dangerous; and is so frequently removed only by operation—often of a complicated character—that we deem it advisable not to lay down regulations which might mislead the patient, and retard instead of advance a cure. Indeed, on every head, more space might have been occupied in details, but the end would have been still to leave the patient no resource but to apply to a medical man; for it cannot be expected that every one should be acquainted with human anatomy and physiology, nor can it be relied on that any course of treatment, however successful in the career of one practitioner, may be equally so in that of another. All that this treatise is designed to show is, the general outlines of the various diseases, their influence and probable results, and the paramount necessity of advice and guidance—to pretend to more would be to deceive the credulous, and excite the sus-

picious of the sagacious ; results equally to be deplored, on the one hand by the patient, on the other by the medical man.

ON SYPHILIS, &c.

As has been before observed, syphilitic affections are not only more malignant in their character, but also more immediately dangerous in their consequence. They are never purely local, although they appear most frequently on certain parts of the body, but they affect the constitution and permeate the whole system. The poison by which they are produced acts directly on the external skin or cuticle, and produces effects dependent in part on the particular position of the imbibing of the poison. The great difficulty in syphilitic affections is to ascertain whether absorption has taken place, and if so, to what extent ; and herein consists the real danger, for if none of the virus has been absorbed, the disease may be treated with ease and safety, whereas when absorption has once supervened the case is often attended with uncertainty, and always with great difficulty and danger. In this latter case it is not sufficient to remove the external symptoms, (ulceration, &c.) but it becomes vitally important to dive, as it were, into the most secret springs of the body and to root the poison out from the system

for, unless this be done, a temporary relief is all that can be anticipated, and the patient not only remains liable to a return of the disease, as secondary symptoms, but he is capable of communicating the concealed enemy to others.

The most ordinary form under which the venereal poison is developed on the body, is that of chancre or ulcer. These chancres appear mostly on some part of the organs of generation; and are caused by a species of inoculation. The lapse of time between the application of the poison and the appearance of the chancre is uncertain; it rather exceeds the period alluded to in describing gonorrhœa, but even this is doubtful. The first symptom is an irritation or itching in the part; this, if the place affected be the glans, is succeeded by a pimple, without much apparent inflammation or tumefaction; but if it be the prepuce, then the inflammatory action is considerably increased, and the pain is consequently more acute. Sometimes the chancre appears on the frœnum, and in this case the part is often destroyed, or ulceration passes through it and contributes much to retard the cure. The irritation caused by chancre on the glands occasionally produces a sympathetic affection of the urethra or urinary canal, which

exhibits itself in what is termed venereal gonorrhœa, and which is much more virulent than that already described. The testicles and scrotum also show symptoms of sympathy, and are often much diseased—but much depends on the state of the constitution at the time of contagion—a state which, in some cases, produces more violent and extensive inflammation, and in others has a tendency to cause excruciating pain without much inflammatory action. Sloughing is an ordinary result of the continuation of chancre, and this has a most detrimental and enervating effect on the constitution, generally leading to consumption and death. Chancre on the prepuce, when highly inflammatory, occasionally produces a thickening of the cellular membrane around the prepuce, a disease known as venereal phymosis, and subsequently paraphymosis. These latter affections are attended, with considerable difficulty, as it happens that the prepuce either becomes so diseased that it cannot be withdrawn from the glans, and ulceration going on between the prepuce and the glans, produces a continued secretion of humour leading to destructive abscesses ; or the prepuce being withdrawn for the purpose of getting at the chancres on the glans, becomes so contracted that it cannot again be drawn forward to protect the

glans, and then secretion goes on in the contracted membrane, which sometimes requires the knife to enable a cure to be performed satisfactorily.

Chancres in women are somewhat similar to those in men, but the parts being less complicated the complaint is often less difficult of treatment. There is one phase of the disease, however, which is peculiar, and that is, the excoriation or ulceration of the anus, caused by the flow of humour from chancres on the labiæ, or in the vagina or urethra.

The treatment of chancre varies very much, but it is generally both internal and external: one important point always to be kept in view is to abridge the duration of the disease, so that it may not take hold of the constitution. The simplest method is the extirpating of the chancre, which may easily be effected at its first appearance, either by incision or caustic—the latter being the safest mode, and that giving comparatively little pain. But this method becomes almost impracticable when the surrounding parts are contaminated, in consequence of the difficulty of entirely removing the diseased places, and hence it is most essential that measures for cure should be resorted to in the earliest stage of the disease. Chancre may also be cured, or deprived

of its venereal character : this was formerly done by means of external or internal applications of mercury, but modern science has discovered specifics not only more efficacious, but more generally beneficial to the constitution, and less liable to lead to the deleterious results arising from the use of the mineral poison before named.

Bubo, or swelling of the glands of the groin, is caused by the absorption of the venereal poison, which is carried along the lymphatics, and in its passage produces inflammation of these vessels. Bubo is the result of chancre or gonorrhœa—in the former case that side of the groin is generally affected on which the chancre appears on the penis ; in the latter, both glands are at times affected. The same absorption takes place in both sexes, and consequently the same disease appears in males and females. Great discrimination, however, is necessary to distinguish the true nature of swellings on the groin, which are not always venereal but sometimes glandular, and which sometimes proceed from inflamed absorbents. The true bubo commonly begins with a sense of acute pain which proceeds from the tumor forming on the part affected. This increases like every other species of inflammatory diseases, and has a ten-

60 DISEASES OF THE ORGANS OF GENERATION.

dency to suppuration more or less retarded according to the nature of the constitution. The bubo retains its original position till after suppuration, and then it becomes more widely spread; the suppuration is extensive, the agony very great, and the skin highly florid. Scrofulous swellings of the glands of the groin are sometimes mistaken for venereal buboes, but they differ very materially in their character, for these latter are generally but little painful and are difficult of suppuration.

Buboes may be treated in two manners: if taken in time they may be dispersed or resolved, or they may be allowed to come to suppuration, and then be proceeded with somewhat like other abscesses. Mercury was formerly the great specific in cases of bubo, but this has long been discontinued by modern medical men, and a course of treatment, based on a better knowledge of the constitution, has been almost universally adopted. The consequence of this new method of cure has been the gradual disappearance of many of the consequences formerly attendant on bubo; but in this as in many other diseases of the generative organs, shame and a desire of concealment have often done almost irremediable injury before application is made to the medical man, who is blamed for all the evil results without his being in the

remotest degree reprehensible. The best advice, the most unremitting attention, the longest experience, are often valueless when the disease has become seated in the constitution; and it is therefore most necessary that on the first appearance of the slightest symptom of venereal affection, application should be made to one who understands the case, in order to prevent evil consequences. Who that visits the London hospitals can doubt the necessity for this observation, when he beholds the numerous victims of ignorant treatment, or delayed recourse to medicine? Who that watches the decay that is consuming so many, can for a moment hesitate to confide in the medical man, when the confidence may and most probably will save him from destruction?

From what has been already said it will be inferred that venereal diseases, although principally confined to the generative organs, sometimes appear in other parts of the body: the nose and throat, and the other non-cuticle portions of the frame are subjected to their influence; but this seldom takes place in the primary stage of the complaint. When however the venereal poison has penetrated into the constitution, through the absorbents, and when the cure has been only local, and confined to the removal of the chancre or bubo, without

reference to the system generally, then it commonly happens that at some subsequent, and not unfrequently remote, period, a second attack is experienced. This is generally designated secondary symptoms, or confirmed syphilis, and is one of the most dangerous and disgusting diseases to which human nature is exposed. No age beyond puberty is exempt from it ; no lapse of time can safely be said to set a limit to its re-appearance, and it very frequently happens, as has been elsewhere said, that the unborn child imbibes disease in the womb, and subsequently comes into the world with a confirmed syphilitic affection. The ravages of this fearful pest are terrible to contemplate, and can only be compared to the decomposition consequent on the bite of a cobra di capello, the only difference being that in the former case the decay is less rapid. No part of the body is free from its attacks : the skin, the tonsils, the nose, the inside of the mouth and throat are alike subject to its influence, and at a later period of its progress the periosteum, fasciæ and bones become diseased. The first appearance of syphilitic affection is in the form of blotches on the skin : these at first resemble inflammatory pimples, but they soon change their form, and the cuticle peels off in the form of scurf. The parts then assume a

copper colour, and the formation of scurf goes on rapidly, till at last a scab is seen, and then ulceration goes on. When the skin on the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet is attacked, the peeling off is more violent in consequence of the extra thickness of the cuticle in those parts. On the other hand, when the sores appear in parts of the body that have a close natural contact, (such as between the thighs or under the arms,) the scab is not dry, but presents a soft moist surface, and discharges white matter. The throat is attacked by ulcers, which soon eat away the cutis, and ultimately lead to gangrene or putrefaction of the part. The tongue becomes thicker and hardens, occasioning a thickness of speech: sometimes it becomes tumefied, and is quite destroyed by the ravages of the disease.

When syphilis attacks the periosteum, the fasciæ, the tendons or the bones, its progress is much more gradual. Swellings of a scrofulus appearance come on, and then slow inflammation sets in. This leads to the formation of a slimy matter which is given off, and eats away the part affected. These swellings, when on the bones, are called nodes; they sometimes last for years before they develop any formation of matter, but when once this begins to be discharged the subsequent progress of the

disease is very rapid. Sometimes considerable pain is experienced, at times very little is felt; at night the symptoms are generally worst. But it is needless to proceed, the details become more disgusting as the disease advances, and it would only be to revolt the mind of the reader to enter more deeply into the subject.

For the reasons before stated, also, it is quite useless to attempt giving any decisive directions for effecting a cure; the symptoms are so different in various individuals, and the parts attacked so opposite, that to lay down any one plan of treatment and call it universal, would be totally impossible. Mercury was, and still is, considered by some as the great specific; its use was sanctioned by HUNTER, and the faculty adopted it on his warrant. But experience has shown too plainly that if the mineral poison does eradicate the disease, which is doubtful, it leaves behind the seeds of disorganization of the system and ultimate dissolution. The only real restoratives are those mild vegetable essences which purify the blood and invigorate the frame, which, beneficial in their use, are innocuous in their effects, and which, while they remove the cause of disease, leave no sting behind.

Messrs. BLAKE & Co. have devoted years to the study

of that particular branch of medicine which applies to the preceding observation, that is, to the treatment of diseases incidental to wild voluptuousness—such as Gonorrhœa, Gleet, Syphilis, &c.; many thousands of cases come annually under their knowledge, and the success which has attended their labours is the best proof of the efficacy of their remedial measures. With them the patient needs not fear the destructive mineral poison—mercury, for it is excluded from their Pharmacopœia: mild vegetable restoratives and stimulants alone are prescribed by Messrs. B. They offer themselves, therefore, most confidently as the friends and advisers of the misguided, and as the medical attendants of the unfortunate: to the former they promise reconstitution and reorganization of the body and mind; to the latter a speedy and safe cure, which will leave no poison in the constitution. Their extensive experience leaves no phase of any of the diseases enumerated unknown to them; the most confirmed solitary habits have yielded to their entreaties and soul-stirring advice, combined with the necessary medical remedies; the most virulent venereal affections, primary and secondary, have been conquered by their course of treatment.

C A S E S.

From among the numerous cases that have come under their notice, Messrs. BLAKE select only the following : they forbear to increase the number, by details of misery and suffering, from feelings which the sensitive will readily appreciate :—

CASE I.

“ London, June 23rd, 1839.

“ GENTLEMEN,—

I have read your address to a friend of mine who has placed himself in your hands, and although the confession costs me many a shameful pang, I feel constrained to betray to you my folly and guilt : your arguments and manly representations have broken down the barrier which shame raised between me and all the best purposes of my existence. I was educated at a

Boarding School, and while there I became initiated in the practice, so common at such places, of Onanism. Always of strong and vigorous habit, I was a fit subject for the temptations of older boys, and I fell a victim to the habit at an age so youthful that I shudder when I think of it. I will not detail to you the various steps by which I was plunged into the abyss in which I now am, I will come at once to its lowest depths—Gentlemen, I am 25 years old and am impotent—perfectly impotent—I cannot, by any exertion of mind or body, place myself in a condition to enjoy the delights which nature presents in a union of the sexes. I need scarcely describe my appearance, I feel yourselves can picture it. I am never free from pain, and at times can scarcely raise myself from bed, my eyes seem to be failing, and I have frequently some difficulty in collecting my ideas. If I get abstracted, or think on any subject for only a few moments, I quite lose myself and feel as though I were going mad. Gentlemen, can you cure my desperate condition? Can art revivify what vice has destroyed? Can you create, for I seem almost to have killed myself and to require a new birth. Oh! if you can restore me to myself, I pray you do—or I feel I shall be driven to rid myself of a life that is a burden to me and useless to

society. Gentlemen, I intreat you, as men—as philanthropists, to have pity on me.——

“I commence again, after the lapse of an hour—my thoughts overcame me just now, and the dizzy confusedness of which I complain supervened—I was unable to continue. I entreat you by all that is dear to you, come to my aid. I love, I adore a girl, who I think returns my affection; I seek her presence under an infatuation, I am fascinated by her gaze, and yet I shrink from it as though it were death. What will she think of me? Her pure soul can form no conception of the torments I endure when I feel myself choking with burning words of love which I dare not utter—for how can I marry her and insult her confidence and beauty by wedding her to a —— . I cannot bring myself to name it—Can you, will you, aid me? Money is no object—whatever you may advise, medicine, change of scene, foreign travel—I will obey you, if you can only restore me to something like myself. Let me have an answer by return; I am longing impatiently to hear your decision.

“I am your obedient servant,

“ M. S.”

To Messrs. Blake & Co., Consulting Surgeons, &c.

We saw the party and found the usual symptoms of confirmed Self-Pollution: voluntary and involuntary emissions, occurring at all times and in all places, in the ball room and theatre especially: weakness of intellect, prostration of physical power. The patient had scarcely described his case so bad as it really was. The result may be judged from the following note:—

“ Clifton, December, 1840.

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ In the first extatic moments of my new found bliss, in my transport of gratified desire and newly wedded love, let me pour out my heart in thanks to you, my benefactors, my preservers. I was married yesterday to the girl I had so long loved: her gratified tears, her clinging trust, her blushing cheek, and suppressed sighs, half pleasure half pain, tell me that I am once more a man, and that the claims of beauty have been answered by the voice of nature. If you could but tell how obliged to you I am, how much I owe you for this result, then you would know how truly and how sincerely I subscribe myself ever,

“ Your very grateful servant,

“ M. S.”

To Messrs. Blake & Co.

N.B.—Pray let no scruples prevent your acceptance of the accompanying mark of my gratitude, as a tribute to your skill and cure. Receive it in the name of love, and as a sacrifice laid at the shrine of my wife's beauty. Should I be blessed with a child you shall hear from me again.

CASE II.

A. L. who had been married some months, called on us and in much agitation confessed that his wife, after silently shaming him by her reproachful looks, had at length spoken to him, and asked what was the reason she had not been initiated into the mysteries of matrimony. He had intreated her forbearance for a short time longer, and came to us. He was incapable of performing his marital functions effectually, had a constant discharge of thin watery fluid, and was so nervously irritable that the slightest contradiction caused him to fall into a state of syncope. The generative organs were small and wasted, the whole body emaciated, and he was besides subject to fits of epilepsy. He had been long addicted to Self-Abuse, and had never sufficient resolution to check himself, although he had become aware of

the pernicious effects of the practice. We prescribed the necessary remedies and ordered a strict regimen, and we soon had the satisfaction of hearing that our endeavours had been attended with the usual success.

CASE III.

A Commission Agent, whose avocation frequently called him out of town, applied for relief from a severe attack of syphilis. He had contracted gonorrhoea several times and had also once before been the victim of syphilis. He had always applied to his family doctor, and had been, as he believed, cured by plentiful doses of mercury. He was, when he came to us, a frightful spectacle: one of his eyes was completely closed by ulcers; his neck and throat were covered with small dark coloured blotches which emitted a foetid discharge; the penis was literally little else but chancres, and was so diseased that we feared it would rot away from the body: he was, in fact, labouring under the worst species of secondary syphilis. We recommended a course of treatment, applied external and internal remedies of a determined character, and ultimately succeeded, although not without much difficulty, in effecting a perfect cure.

CASE IV.

"GENTLEMEN,

"I beg your most careful and prompt attention to the annexed.

"I am a young man of 21 years of age, who unhappily several years ago contracted the habit that you term 'Seminal weakness,' or 'Self-Abuse.' A consciousness of the evil induced me to try to overcome the tendency to abuse myself, and I have partially succeeded, but in my sleep, sometimes without a cause, a discharge takes place, and sometimes I dream and this causes it. This now takes place about once a week, and just when my mind is getting fitted for study, this disturber of my peace steps in and renders my powers almost useless. I have always lived regularly in every sense of the word, excepting that on which I now write to you.

"I beg earnestly that you will send *all that is necessary for this case*, and take the trouble *to write to me* with your *valuable advice* for my future guidance, and direct, if possible, *on receipt*, to be left at the general post-office for,

"Gentlemen,

"Your most obedient servant,

"J. J. J."

To Messrs. Blake & Co.

CASE V.

“ November 25th, 1843.

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ I beg leave with *shame* to inform you that whilst at school I was unfortunately taught the baneful habit of self-pollution, which I continued until the age of twenty-eight, (my age now is thirty) when becoming sensible, not alone of its moral *culpability*, but also of its physical dangers, I abandoned the practice, and sought more natural means of gratifying my passions ; but I have found that the evil consequences of my guilty indulgences had *surely*, though *silently*, taken root, and that, although my general health is good and my frame robust, yet I am totally unable to accomplish the sexual act. I have a violent pain across the lower part of my back, extending from *hip* to *hip*, so extremely painful is it that when I stoop at my work, which is that of a shipwright, I am scarcely able to rise again, and I find that I am getting weaker every day. I shall feel greatly obliged if you will send me, *by the bearer*, something to relieve me,

“ I shall ever remain,

“ Your humble servant,

“ J. W.”

To Messrs. Blake & Co.

CASE V.

B. W., aged 40, consulted as under the following circumstances. He had, about twelve months prior to the application, returned from the East Indies, where he had resided in the Company's service for 20 years, and realised a handsome independence. During the period of being abroad he had been in tolerable health, except one or two slight attacks of liver complaint, which had quickly yielded to a course of calomel. About nine months after his return he had married, with every prospect of domestic happiness, but found himself quite incompetent for sexual intercourse, as, whenever he attempted it, there was an immediate emission without a proper erection, or a power of effecting an entrance. He was the more astonished at this, as his general health was pretty good, and he had always prided himself on the possession of good muscular strength. Being much attached to this lady, he laboured under great distress of mind, called on us and stated his case. On questioning him as to the practice of self-indulgence he candidly admitted that, as an inexperienced school boy, he remembered being addicted to it, but when he grew up, being disgusted with the unmanliness of the *act*, he had entirely relinquished it, and had certainly

not, in any instance, been guilty of it for more than 20 years. During his residence abroad he had been rather freely addicted to women, and had also been subject to frequent emissions in his sleep, still he had not been conscious of any debility until he had married. We felt much pleasure in relieving his dejection by stating that his case was perfectly curable ; it clearly arose from early indiscretion, combined with the relaxation consequent on living in a tropical climate ; we strictly enjoined him for a short time to abstain from all attempts at intercourse, and ministered a course of tonic medicine, in conjunction with local cold bathing and moderate exercise, and in one month his energy and vigour were perfectly reinstated.

CASE VI.

A young man, aged 27, employed in a solicitor's office, consulted us for an inveterate gleet. He stated that when about 23 he had contracted a severe gonorrhœa, for which the usual remedies had been resorted to, apparently with success, but as soon as he discontinued taking medicine the discharge re-appeared, and if

neglected gradually increased till it put on the aspect of a recent infection. He applied to several medical men without success; they easily removed all inflammatory action, but the gleet remained, and he always found intemperance in diet or sexual intercourse materially aggravated the discharge. As he was peculiarly circumstanced, being under an engagement of marriage with excellent prospects, he felt very much disheartened, and called for our advice and assistance. We laid down rules as to diet, &c., ordered local cold bathing in conjunction with the necessary medicines; and we are happy to state that in eight weeks from our first seeing him he was completely cured. He has since married; there has been no recurrence of the disease, and by the judicious combination of strengthening medicine with the remedy for the complaint, his virile powers were completely reinstated, and there has not been the slightest debility consequent on his change of situation. Within the last three years he has twice been a father.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

We pause here from a persuasion that enough has been said to convince the most sceptical, of the paramount necessity of medical treatment in all cases of local debility or venereal affection. We do not insist on application being made to us in particular, but we *do* recommend that care be taken that the practitioner resorted to be one who sedulously excludes mercury from his remedies, and we offer ourselves, where no previous predilection exists in favour of another, as advisers whose experience and uniform success afford a safe guarantee for the speedy restoration of the patient.

It is at all times difficult to speak of oneself; self-confidence is often mistaken for assurance, and the independence of self-reliance is but too frequently confounded with the blustering impertinence of charlatanism. Still we venture to promise, that those who may honour us with their attention will find us not actuated by considerations of lucre or personal advantage, so much as

by a sincere and ardent desire for the welfare of our patients : we make their interest ours, we identify ourselves, as it were, with them, and a community of feeling which materially benefits those mentally afflicted, soon springs up, and this contributes towards effecting a cure.

In conclusion, Messrs. BLAKE would impress on their readers the fact, that, in order to enable a medical man to arrive at a knowledge of the real state of his patient, the most unbounded confidence is necessary : there must not be either concealment or evasion, but whatever may tend to throw light on the disease, must be openly avowed. Thousands perish who might have been saved had they dared to betray all their weakness or criminality, and Messrs. BLAKE would, therefore, shrink from assuming any responsibility where the necessary means for discharging their duty are not placed at their disposal. Established, as their house has been, for more than half a century, deriving, as they do, their knowledge as much from the experience of the past as from the practice of the present, they promise a certain cure, if medicine can effect one, to all who consult them with perfect candour and firmness : more they cannot presume to offer. They do not desire to thrust themselves on the diseased, for the satisfaction of restoring the health is too frequently

accompanied by such fearful trials that the task of healing is not always the most grateful one. Messrs **BLAKE** desire simply to benefit their fellow creatures, and with this view only do they recommend the attentive perusal of these pages to all classes of the community; to the sound, that they may be prepared should disease afflict them, and to the diseased, that they may be restored to health.

Finally, to those afflicted with any affection of the generative organs, Messrs. **BLAKE & Co.** offer their celebrated **NEUROSIAN EXTRACT**, the efficacy of which has been tested by thousands with unfailing success. Its mild yet searching influence is felt almost immediately; it amalgamates with the constitutional secretions, and while checking the disorder at once, purifies and invigorates the whole system. It is particularly valuable in cases of debility, &c., arising in females, and may with safety be taken in every condition.

This Extract is sold in Bottles at 11s.; four Bottles in one at 33s.; or in Cases at £5 5s.

Prepared only by Messrs. **BLAKE & Co.**, *Consulting Surgeons*, 22, Bartlett's Buildings, (*opposite Hatton Garden*), Holborn Hill.

Messrs. **BLAKE**, also, strongly recommend their





